

## City of Tempe Towing Fact Sheet

On Jan. 4, 2007, the Tempe City Council approved revising the Tempe code for towing from private property. The code changes will go into effect Feb. 3, 2007 with the new charges and fees taking effect immediately. Below is a list of the major changes to the code.

- **Maximum Towing Charges and Fees**

Private towing carriers can charge the following fees for towing without the owners consent:

- \$120 towing charge flat fee
- \$20 after business hours release fee
- No charge for service calls not resulting in a tow
- \$15 per 24 hours storage fee, which is not applicable if the towed vehicle is claimed within 24 hours of the tow

- **Proof of Ownership**

Prior to the release of a towed vehicle, the owner or operator of the vehicle must demonstrate proof of ownership of the vehicle. The owner must show the towing company the vehicle registration or title and some form of government photographic identification or written authorization from the owner.

- **Release and Billing Information**

To assist private towing carriers in bill collection and to assist the vehicle owner in understanding the billing and collection process, the private towing carrier must ask for a telephone number of the vehicle claimant and that vehicle claimant must be provided with a copy of the private towing carrier's billing and collection procedures.

- **Authority To Tow**

Private towing companies do not have the authority to tow a vehicle off private property unless they are authorized by the owner or agent of the property or they are requested by law enforcement. The towing contracts, which provide the authority to tow between the property owner and the towing company, must be made readily available to law enforcement upon request.

- **Signage Requirements (see sample towing sign)**

No private towing carrier shall tow a vehicle from a private parking area unless the signs are posted with the following information.

- Restrictions on parking (i.e., Reserved Parking).
- Disposition of vehicles found in violation of parking restrictions (i.e., Violators will be towed at owners expense).
- Maximum cost to the violator, including storage fees and any other charges that could result from the disposition of vehicle parked in violation of parking restrictions. This information must be printed on the sign in one inch lettering.
- Telephone number and address where the violator can locate vehicle.
- Each sign shall state: Tempe City Code, Section 32-6.
- Signs must be a minimum of 12 inches wide by 18 inches tall.
- Signs must be mounted at a minimum height of 5 feet and a maximum height of 10 feet above the ground.

- A sign must be posted at the main business/parking lot entrance.
  - Signs must also be posted in the parking area and must be visible from 50 feet.
  - The tow company must display at their place of business a sign which lists the towing charges and fees.
- **Signage Recommendations**
- The City recommends private property owners/businesses make their signs as visible as possible. The following recommendations are intended to assist in making signs visible.
- Use retro-reflective lettering to improve nighttime visibility.
  - Use a red background color for sign.
  - Body text and City Code font: Standard bold.
  - Towing information font: Universe 65.
  - Signs recommended to be mounted at a height of 7 feet above the ground.
  - One towing sign should be placed at every 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> parking spot in the lot.
  - Signs larger than 12" x 18" are encouraged when the property owner/business requires additional information be placed on the sign.
- **Penalties For Violations**
- Violations of City Code are punishable by law. Violations of Chapter 32, except section 32-5 related to the authority to tow, are treated as a class 1 misdemeanor. For violations of section 32-5, fines range from a minimum of \$250 to a maximum of \$1,000.

For more information, including a link to the entire City Code, visit [www.tempe.gov/towing](http://www.tempe.gov/towing)